



CUSTER COUNTY PROFILE

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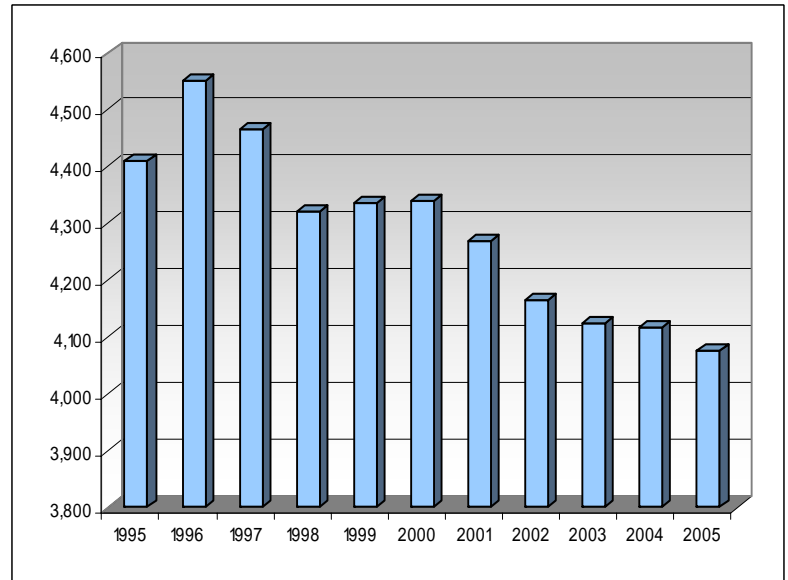
E-Mail: talban@cl.idaho.gov – Labor Market Information website: cl.idaho.gov/lmi

June 2006

Population

Custer County ranks 39th in the state with a 2005 population of 4,077 and has an average of eight-tenths of a person per square mile. The county's history shows the effects of the mining industry over the decade with decreases occurring up to 1993 and peaking around 1996. Hecla Mining closed earlier in the decade and Thompson Creek Mining, still considered one of the largest employers, started phasing out its operation several years ago. The county saw a decrease in population of 332 over the decade, but decreased 475 from its peak in 1996.

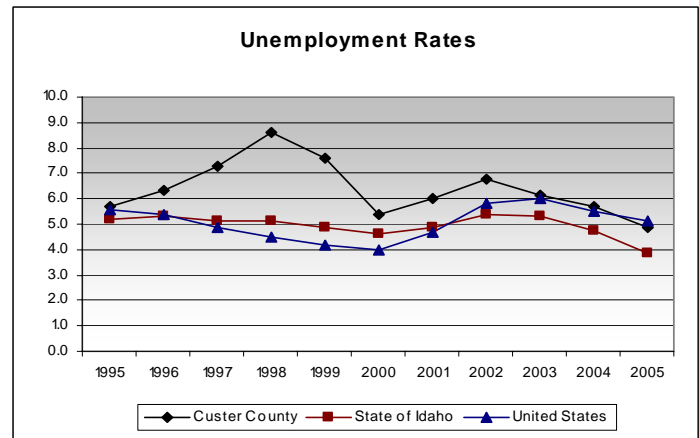
The county has been concentrating on economic development in order to diversify and divert itself from earlier dependency on mining. Economic developers are working hand-in-hand with governmental officials to attract new or expanding businesses to reverse, or at least slow down, potential declines.



Labor Force & Employment

Custer County recorded a higher unemployment rate than either the state or nation throughout the decade until the past three years where it has been comparable to the nation. Mining activity threw the unemployment rate soaring into double digits from 1993 to 1994. Population fell below the 4,000 mark in 1993, but took a three-year steep incline to its peak in 1996. *Civilian Labor Force* steadily decreased from 1995 to 1999, then increased over 600 in 2000. From 2002 to 2005, the labor force has increased 350. *Civilian Labor Force* is a count of people 16 years of age and older who are working or seeking work and who are non-institutionalized and non-military. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been for the whole decade. The county has been affected by forest fires, the national 9/11 and mine closures throughout the decade.

As shown on the pie chart on the back of this profile, the county is noticeably divided by industrial categories. *Government* and *Other Services* take up half of all jobs in the

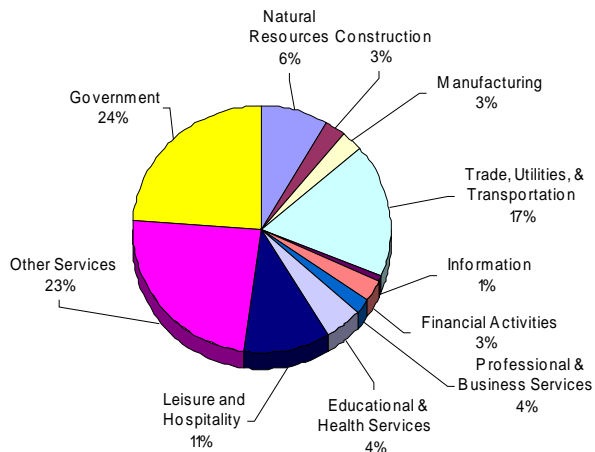


county. With only 5 percent of the land being privately owned, the federal and state land requires maintenance and care, of which many of the *Government* jobs account for (Department of Fish & Game, Department of Interior, and Department of Agriculture) along with employees of school districts and local officials. *Trade* is still a large industry of which large employer Three Rivers Stone Corporation plays a part in the *Wholesale Trade* operation. Tourism plays a large part in the county, adding to *Leisure & Hospitality* jobs. Such locations as Redfish Lake, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, and Borah Peak (the highest point in Idaho) are popular tourist attractions.

Labor Force	May 2005	May 2006
Civilian Labor Force	2,648	2,788
Total Employment	2,520	2,691
Unemployed	128	97
Custer County % Unemployed	4.8	3.5
State of Idaho % Unemployed	3.9	3.4
U.S. % Unemployed	5.1	4.7

Labor Force	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Civilian Labor Force	2,512	2,473	2,133	2,129	2,003	2,612	2,697	2,284	2,490	2,584	2,630
Unemployment	143	155	156	184	153	141	162	155	152	147	129
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.7	6.3	7.3	8.6	7.6	5.4	6.0	6.8	6.1	5.7	4.9
Employment	2,369	2,318	1,977	1,945	1,850	2,471	2,535	2,129	2,338	2,436	2,502

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2004



Covered Employment & Wages

Covered employment includes employers who are subject to state and federal unemployment insurance laws. These laws apply to approximately 92 percent of Idaho's employers.

Covered employment has grown by 36 jobs over the decade. During the same time, covered wages have increased \$3,866. The county's per capita income is just under the state's average with *Mining* wages still being the highest of all industries.

Major Employers

Challis & Mackay Jnt School Dist #181 & #182
Custer County
Idaho & U.S. Government (BLM, F&G, Ag)
Personal Home Care Inc
Thompson Creek Mining Co
Three Rivers Stone Corp
Village Square

Eastern ID Occupational Wages*	Average Wage
Agricultural Workers	\$8.47
Cashiers	\$7.79
Crushing, Grinding, & Polishing Mach. Setters, Operators & Tenders	\$13.10
Extraction Workers	\$19.33
Food & Beverage Serving Workers	\$6.59
Industrial Truck/Tractor Operators	\$11.32
Laborers & Material Movers, Hand	\$8.45
Lodging Managers	\$15.72
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	\$7.06
Retail Sales Workers	\$9.52

* Wage data includes 15 counties of Eastern Idaho. Additional Occupational Wage data can be found on the Idaho Commerce & Labor website at cl.idaho.gov/lmi.

Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 1994, 2003, & 2004	1994		2003		2004	
	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages	1,549	\$21,690	1,564	\$23,756	1,585	\$25,556
Agriculture	23	\$18,451	32	\$20,005	40	\$21,078
Mining	237	\$35,910	135	\$45,676	173	\$55,628
Construction	150	\$37,477	83	\$32,118	60	\$35,426
Manufacturing	*	*	5	\$17,749	5	\$20,858
Trade, Utilities, & Transportation	208	\$15,125	346	\$19,068	367	\$20,052
Information	18	\$19,563	*	*	*	*
Financial Activities	48	\$13,435	57	\$12,752	58	\$13,431
Professional and Business Services	41	\$22,105	49	\$14,994	37	\$15,812
Educational and Health Services	35	\$12,550	93	\$9,486	98	\$10,345
Leisure and Hospitality	280	\$9,820	228	\$13,599	228	\$13,789
Other Services	27	\$13,536	27	\$20,660	24	\$17,113
Government	481	\$21,668	488	\$29,111	475	\$28,924

Per Capita Income	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Custer County	\$18,912	\$18,158	\$20,495	\$22,391	\$20,834	\$22,622	\$23,287	\$21,951	\$22,217	\$23,757
State of Idaho	\$18,707	\$19,426	\$20,248	\$20,648	\$21,789	\$22,786	\$24,075	\$25,185	\$25,330	\$26,877
United States	\$22,172	\$23,076	\$24,175	\$25,334	\$26,883	\$27,939	\$29,845	\$30,575	\$30,804	\$31,472

Information provided by U.S. Census Bureau



This county is served by the office listed below:
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